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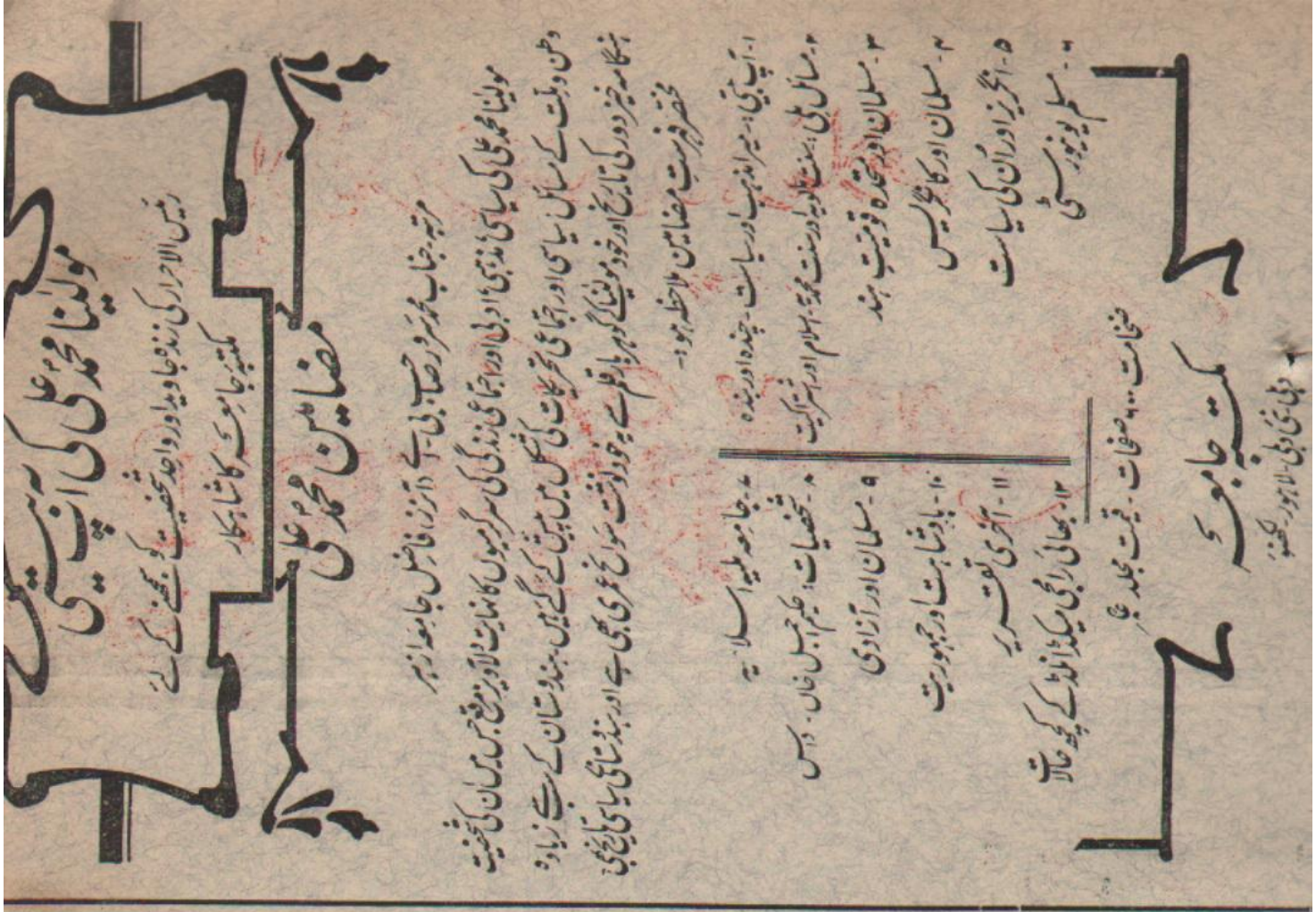

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Review of Religions

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نحمدہٗ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. The starting point in Religion was the question of the existence of God. It was also the fundamental basis for moral concepts of all kinds, for ethics dealt with the question of right and wrong, which could not rise unless the goal of human life was first determined and fixed. Evidently, in the case of a man starting on a journey without any idea as to his destination, there could be no question of a *right* or a *wrong* way.

If man and the universe were no more than chance phenomena, or just a random product of blind unrelated forces, it was futile and silly to seek to invest life with an aim and a purpose to which in its creation and constitution it had no reference. Certainly, in that case, no one had any right to invent a goal and burden the rest of mankind with his own pet fancy: every individual must be left *perfectly* free to live his life in his own way, according to the impulse of the moment. If a man tore his brother to pieces and made a meal out of his flesh, or if he gave his own meat to feed the hungry, there would be no difference in the quality of the two acts. One would be as good as the other, or both equally bad. In fact no distinction could at all be drawn between the two. The law of the jungle, which was no law at all, could be the only logical outcome of this view of the universe.

In the ultimate analysis, therefore, life could have no aim, no deep abiding purpose, unless we accepted

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the idea that the creation of the universe was the work of an *Intelligent Mind, with some definite end in view.* In the glorious language of the Holy Quran :

"Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for men of understanding;

"Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth; Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee!" (*iii*, 189-90).[1]

2. The world-wide prevalence of ideas with regard to a Supreme Deity indicated, moreover, that the existence of God was no mere supposition. Had there been no valid experience and witness at the back of these ideas——an experience and a witness widely distributed over the globe in time and place——they could not have gained such universal acceptance. We read in the Holy Quran :

"And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (*xxxv*: 24).

Some students of Comparative Religion hold that the idea of God owed its origin to fear. In the primitive ages, they say, when man lived in caves he began to worship snakes, etc., out of fear, and gradually the idea grew into the idea of God. In the first place scientific philosophers do not agree with this view; secondly, on closer scrutiny their agreement is found to be opposed to the very theory of evolution on which it is based. If man evolved into the present form after passing through the lower stages of animal life, in these stages he must have had frequent encounters with animals of inferior type and must have killed them often. Then how can we suppose that he succumbed to fear of them when he had developed into a species more powerful than before! In the jungle, moreover,

1. Reference to Quranic texts can be greatly multiplied on each point but for the sake of brevity we have contented ourselves with only one quotation in each case.

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there were also other wild beasts like lions and tigers. If the idea of God arose from man cringing in fright in the presence of animals capable of inflicting injury upon him, he should have taken to the worship of all those animals. But this was not so, and the origin of the idea of a Supreme Deity had, therefore, to be sought elsewhere.

Again, the study of comparative Religion itself led us to the conclusion that the idea of a Supreme God existed among the primitive people side by side with their worship of other objects. They called him by different names of course, but the idea was there. Among the primitive people of Mexico He was ealled *Awona Wilona*; among the wild tribes of Africa He was known as *Nyongmo*; among the aborigines of Australia as *Altjira*; among the Zulus as *Unkulunkieln*; and among the Bantus as *Nizambi*. The conception behind these names in all cases was that of an invisible creator of the Universe.

It had been urged by some that these conceptions of a Universal Deity represented a later development, but this view was not tenable. If the idea of God could not be traced in the previous stages of their civilizations, then the possibility of such an idea springing up later did not rise at all. Among these people there existed, moreover, the idea of Revelation which they held to be the medium through which they came to have knowledge of God. Besides, it was common experience that later ideas as a rule supplanted earlier ones. Therefore, if the worship of God rose at a later period than the worship of other objects, then the worship of God should be found to occupy the most important position in primitive cults. But such was nowhere the case; what we found in actual fact was that this position was held by animal or fetish worship while the idea of God was found relegated to an obscure corner. This could have only one meaning, namely, that the worship of objects other than God represented a degeneration of the idea during periods of decadence.

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3. Thirdly, scientific research had thoroughly established the fact that nothing in the Universe was so constituted as to be able to stand alone and to subsist of itself, independently of other objects around it. Even in the elements there was action and reaction between the atoms and the molecules. Evidently, therefore, a Universe comprising objects of this kind could not be conceived to have come into being of itself, nor was it possible to imagine that it continued to exist without outside support and control. The Holy Quran draws attention to this truth by referring to an attribute of the Divine Being: that he was *Samad* (Ch. cxii), which meant that He did not require support from anything, but everything beside Him stood in need of His support.

It should also be borne in mind, moreover, that for an object complete in itself and capable of standing alone it was impossible to combine with anything else or to accept any change. Even if the existence of a perfect atom were to be conceded, it would not solve the riddle of creation, for a Universe of constant change could not be taken to have evolved from a substance that constitutionally stood debarred from accepting any change whatsoever.

4. Fourthly, the theory of evolution itself constituted strong proof of the existence of God. In Sura Nooh we read:

"O men, how is it ye do not understand that there is wisdom in the works of God, while He has brought you to perfection through different stages and ages!"

These verses spoke of two laws that governed the creation of man. Firstly, that he was brought to completion after passing through a long period divided into several cycles. Secondly, that man did not acquire the present form through some sudden, instataneous change. This slow, mature and purposeful growth along a set course indicated the hand of a controlling agency, guiding the process towards some definite aim. What we knew of the nature of the Universe made the conclusion inevitable that there was indeed a process of evolution at work in it, though the point should be very well

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grasped that the Quranic idea of evolution was different from what the followers of Darwin advocated. There had been, as it were, waves of creation from the lowest to the highest. First came the creation of inanimate objects —the heavenly bodies and the earth, and the creation of water preceded the creation of life. In the Holy Quran we read :

"And We have made from water every living thing" (*xxi.* : 30).

Then came the earliest and lowest forms of life contributing to the emergence of the higher species by purifying the atmosphere and enriching the soil by means of deposits through death and decay. When the atmosphere was sufficiently clear, there was created a being requiring pure air to breathe in. This intelligent process, so nicely planned, pointed to the existence of an Intelligent Creator. We know that with the creation of man physical evolution came to an end and there began a process of evolution of the mind. Now why was that ? If the process was not controlled by an Intelligent Will, why did the field of progress switch off on to another plane ?

5. Fifthly, the existence of God stood proved according to the same canons of evidence on which were founded all the branches of human knowledge, and with the help of which the most complicated issues in human disputes were decided everyday by competent courts in every country. Not every educated man had been to France or the United States of America, but everyone with even a smattering of geography believed in the existence of these countries. Again, the present generation knew nothing directly of either of Cæsar or Napoleon but all recognised that they were men who lived and left their mark on the history of mankind. In history and geography, even in the case of the exact sciences, our knowledge, therefore, went by evidence. What we learnt from reliable people we accepted as true. Then what reasonable ground did we possess to reject the testimony of a Zoroaster, a Moses, a Confucius, a Buddha, a Jesus Christ, or a Muhammad. And there were many others like them in

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every clime and country. So widely distributed over the earth in place and time, they all bore witness to the existence of God, who spoke to them and manifested Himself to them. Was there any one whose truthfulness, integrity, reliability and disinterestedness was better proved than the truthfulness and integrity of these great leaders ? Buddha was a prince of royal blood and heir to a kingdom which he threw aside at the call of God. Jesus bore witness to Him, but from the worldly point of view what did he get for his trouble that we should want to reject his testimony as not being disinterested enough. And Muhammad who rose to be the undisputed sovereign of a mighty nation, with absolute powers over property and life ! Who lived his life under a thatched roof or in a mud cabin ; whose diet was always dates or *soweeq*, (flour of parched barley, immersed in water and sweetened if possible) ; whose greatest delight in food was milk and honey ; who mended his own shoes; who was not above using worn out, patched and mended garments ! Yes ! the same Muhammad who challenged his bitterest enemies to prove a single falsehood against him— the Muhammad who was known in Mecca as *Al-Amin* —the faithful, the truthful, and the trustworthy. Muhammad who said to his countrymen :

" I ask for no reward for the message I bring to you, for my reward indeed doth lie with Allah."

Men of this calibre, in all ages, have borne witness to the existence of God. How could we be justified to turn a deaf ear to their testimony.

This was a most weighty argument, and the evidence of such men could not be lightly brushed aside. Confronted with this evidence atheists could only seek shelter in the assumption that these so-called prophets of God were really self-deluded men, and mentally defective. But in the face of their balanced lives and unequalled achievements nothing could be more preposterous than the supposition that men who unrevelled the profounded spiritual truths, who were the most solid nation-builders history had known, who wrought

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a change in the lives of millions of people, who could transform the hearts of men, were only mental defectives. The Holy Quran says: —

"Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah, the King, the Mighty, the Wise.

"He it is who raised among the Meccans an Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom, although they were before certainly in clear error."

Indeed, insane men could not build nations. Nor could they give teachings representing in each case a distinct and vast advance on the the conditions preceding their dispensations.

6. Sixthly, we should remember that objects having no physical beings could not be perceived by the same means which we employed in the case of material things. The manner of knowing the non-physical was different. Accordingly, to know God, the proper way was to study the manifestation of His attributes. There would certainly remain no valid reason to deny Him should the existence of such attributes be proved and demonstrated. Here, for considerations of space, we can refer to only one of these: His power. All the Apostles of God, who founded great religions and built the world anew each time, so to say, were invariably men so humble and weak that the success of their missions was impossible had success depended upon material means alone. Secondly the opposition offered to them was so bitter and sustained that the like of it had never been offered to any other kind of leader. Thirdly, their teachings were always opposed not only to the ideas of their respective ages, but also to the tendencies popular with the coming generations. Notwithstanding all this, they proclaimed at the very outset that they would ultimately succeed in their mission and indicated, moreover, the manner in which success was to come to them. And History bears testimony that they did actually succeed, and succeed

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in the manner they had foretold.

Take the case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). What was his position in Mecca? He was brought up as an orphan. He was born in a town where tribal life made it impossible for any one to go against the wishes of the community. But he claimed to be sent by God, and foretold his success with such vigour that the Meccans were struck with wonder. That was not all, however: he indicated the exact line which coming events were to take. He declared that a day was to come when the Meccans would force him into exile from his native town, but that after a period he would return as a conqueror. Now what secret source of super-human knowledge enabled the Holy Prophet to foretell all these events so accurately? The Meccans might not have forced him to leave his native city; indeed, in view of their murderous designs, his death at their hands was more likely. We know that they hatched conspiracies and made frantic efforts to kill him. But, miraculously, he slipped through the net and reached Medina in safety. Again, who could gaurantee that a man driven out from his home and repudiated by his own people, would find shelter in exile; that in the end people would begin to follow his teaching; that in his own lifetime he would attain to such power that he would subdue Meccan opposition and enter that city as a victor! Only God Almighty could have done all this whose power over the Universe was unlimited and absolute.

It should be remembered that the success of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, or of Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus and Krishna and Buddha, was not like the success attained by some political leaders—by a Napoleon or a Hitler. The Apostles of God achieved success in direct opposition to the ideas and views of their respective ages, while political leaders only represented the views of their times and embodied burning national aspirations. Political leaders always rode on the current: the Apostles of God steerd a coarse up stream in the teeth of a mad rush of the waters down-hill—in the face of tearing and raging torrents.

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7. To conclude this short study of a great, rather the greatest subject, let us take the argument of personal experience. God says in the Holy Quran :

"Those who strive to come to Us, indeed We show them the way to reach Us."

This is an argument the force of which everyone could feel for himself. All the Apostles of God, to whichever country or nation they belonged, claimed not only that they personally enjoyed communion with God, but also that others too could reach Him. The promise of God given out to the world through the Prophet of Islam has already been referred to. Jesus also said that the signs he had shown were in no way peculiar or special to him ; that any one who had faith could experience them.

" Now, sisters and brothers, when the matter is as easy as that, why should we not seek to solve this question by practical personal experience rather than by discussion and word of mouth ! I say this to you in perfect confidence that should any one try to find God with a truely sincere heart, and be prepared to believe in Him, should His existence be proved, and be prepared, moreover, to regulate his life in accordance with the guidance vouchsafed by Him, he would never be disappointed. Many have tested the truth of this before, so why not verify it yourself..... May God open our hearts for His love and guidance." [1]

1. Amirul Momineen Hazrat Khalifatul Massih in a talk broadcast from Bombay.

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THE VEDAS AND THEIR REVELATION—I*

[The learned writer of this article, Professor Rudra Deva, Shastri, was formerly Head of the Sanskrit Department of Indian Culture and Indian Philosophy in the Kashi Vidyapith (University), Benares. He accepted Islam some months ago.—*Editor.*]

The books, four in number, on which the Hindu religion is based, are called the *Vedas* or *Vedic Sanghata* (collection).

The word *ved* is derived from a Sanskrit root which carries the meaning of "knowledge" and "perception." Some scholars regard this word as derived from four roots which, according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, is possible. Combining the sense of all these roots, the word implies a twofold meaning: (*a*) knowledge; (*b*) knowledge by pondering over which, and by acting on which, man can derive benefit. The word carries the meaning (*a*) when it is taken to be derived from a single root, and the meaning (*b*) when treated as derived from four roots.

Scholars of comparative philology consider this Sanskrit root (*vid*) as being akin to the Latin root *videre* the meaning of which as given in dictionaries is "to see." According to some bigger and fuller dictionaries *videre* is also connected with the English word "idea." The Sanskrit root *vid* may thus be translated as "knowledge," "idea" or "vision," corresponding to the "*vipashyna*" of Buddhist literature. Professor Maurice Bloomfield, in his essays on Vedic and classical Sanskrit literature, connects this root with the Greek *foida*, old Bulgarian *vede*, Gothic *wait* (all three meaning "I know"), old High German *wizzan*, German *wissan*, English *wit*, and Latin *videre*.

Those who have brought serious study to bear upon the Vedas, stand, in many cases, poles apart in their estimate of these ancient compositions. Differences of opinion are wide among them, and complex and acute, but broadly speaking they can be divided into

* Translated from Urdu.

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two convenient groups: (1) Those who take the Vedas to be "Revealed Books"; (2) and those who attribute them to the composition of man and interpret them purely from the historical point of view.

Those who believe them to be "Revealed Books" are the Orthodox Hindus; while the hetrodox or Unorthodox Hindus, and Oriental Scholars in Europe and America, take them to have been composed by men.

Buddhists too of both the *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* schools, as well as the followers of all the 18 prominent schools of philosophy among them, also the two branches of the Jains (*i.e.* the *Shwetambar* and *Degambar*, the last named now practically extinct) do not regard the Vedas to be "Revealed Books."

The number of those who believe in the Vedas is thus severely reduced. The census reports do not show what is the number of Orthodox Hindus in India, nor the number of those of the hetrodox or the unorthodox type; and beyond the evidence of the census reports we have no reliable means to determine these numbers. In any case, a considerable number of people treat the Vedas as ancient books of history written at random; as no more than mythology; as a collection of tales and fables; as an encyclopædia of primitive man; as a collection of pamphlets and theses on different points, often on unrelated subjects; or as the severe meditations of ancient *rishees* mingled with their efforts to solve the riddles of metaphysics and cosmology.

Those desirous of obtaining an ampler account of these varying points of view should refer to *Sanskrit Worter Buch* or the St. Petersburgh Sanskrit-German Dictionary by Rudolf von Roth and Professor Boetlingk, which deals with them all singly. In this small article, however, it is not possible to go into such a detailed account.

The division into those who regard the Vedas to be of Divine origin and those who look upon them as human compositions, is an old division; but this differ-

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ence of opinion was never so acutely felt as it has been since the day European scholars turned their search-lights upon these ancient scriptures and began to produce scholarly treatise on the subject. In 1846, Professor Rudolf von Roth wrote a book on the History of the Vedas and Vedic literature. In 1852 Professor A. Weber delivered a series of University Lectures in Germany on the history and literature of India, and then wrote a series of articles on the same subject in the *Indish Studium*. As early as 1784, Sir William Jones, with the approval of Waren Hastings, had founded the Bengal Asiatic Society. An officer of the East India Company, Henry Thomas Colebrooke by name, produced in 1805 a series of articles in the *Asiatic Researches* under the title "Essays on the Vedas". In 1837, the German scholar Fredrick Rosen published in Roman characters a $\frac{1}{8}$th portion (called *Ashtack* in Vedic terminology) of the Rig Ved.

These researches startled the Orthodox Hindus who, so far, on the basis of *Manu Smriti*, *Shatpat Brahman* and the *Upnishads*, and on the basis of their traditions and civilization, had believed them to be divinely revealed books.

In the Presidency towns and some other large towns of India, when universities were constituted and arrangements made in these universities for the study of Sanskrit as well, the earliest professors to teach the language in the colleges were, for the most part, not Indian *pundits* but imported from outside – either German, French, English or Dutch, etc. Even the college founded in Benares itself for intensive studies in Sanskrit had, for a long time, a European for its principal.

Contact with these scholars, as was only to be expected, began to agitate the Orthodox Hindu mind, and hoary *pundits*, who had spent their lives in the study of the Vedas and Vedic literature, always with inherited faith and never with a critical eye, when confronted with results of the new method of study

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and the searching beams of scientific treatment, were staggered and became quite confused. On the major portion of the front they were not qualified to meet the attack, but even on the points where they could stand firm they were sadly hampered by the fact that in their limited intercourse with these scholars they had to depend upon interpreters. The "old fashioned" *pundit* thus came into existence; and this expression be came quite common in general usage, which was only a mild and civilized way of branding the poor creatures as fools. Henceforth, the real *pundits* were those who were nurtured in the new culture and the new light. In this tug-of-war between the old and the new, the ranks of those who believed in the divine origin of the Vedas were sadly depleted; and out of the two lines that had till then been running parallel, one now came to be called *old* and the other *new*.

European scholars in the study of the Vedas and Vedic literature have given evidence of a fair mind and literary taste. Without closing their eyes to the faults of this unique collection, they have given praise where was due. For instance Professor F. Max-Muller, who was the first to occupy the Chair of Comparative Philology in Oxford University and who was the general editor of the series known as Sacred Books of the East, commented upon the Vedas in 1859 in his book called *The History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, from which the following extracts are quoted as representing his point of view:—

1. "This earlier authority which is alluded to in theological and philosophical writings and in works of poetry, law, astronomy and metrical, grammatical, lexicographic compositions, is called by one comprehensive name —The "Ved."

2. "Whatever be the age of the Vedas, they are the oldest books in existence."

3. "In the history of the world the Ved fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to the times of which we have no records anywhere, and gives us the very words of a generation

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of men of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race, and as long as we collect in liberaries and museums the relics of the former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contains the record of the Aryan branch of mankind, will belong for ever to the Rig Ved."

Practically the same thing, though with a little variation of words, has been said by Professor W. D. Whitney in *Language and its Study*. Professor Whitney was a scholar whose worth was recognised on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1856, in collaboration with Professor Rudolf von Roth, he was responsible for the publication of the Shaunak (Shakha) School of Athar Ved. Professor Whitney's estimate of the Vedas is well expressed in the following passage :—

"No single circumstance more powerfully aided the onward movement than the introduction to Western scholars of Sanskrit, the ancient and sacred dialect of India. Its exceeding age, its remarkable conservation of primitive material and forms, its unequalled transparency of structure, gives it an undisputable right to the first place among tongues of the Indo-European family. Upon this comparison, already fruitfully begun, it cast a new and welcome light, displaying clearly their hitherto obscure relations, rectifying the doubtful etymologies, illustrating the laws of research which must be followed in their study, and in that of all other languages."

Other orientalists too have arrived at more or less a similar estimate of the Vedas which those who believe in them often try to use as an argument to prove that they are revealed books. But there lies a deep fallacy in this argument. The mere fact of antiquity can by no means establish their divine origin. Coming to study this argument closely, it gives one the impression that it could appeal only to those guided by some illusion. When a thirsty antelope in the midst of a hot and burning desert runs towards a mirage, at the end of his run he finds no water, and all the good that the run has done him is to have tired him uselessly and to have made him all the more

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thirsty. But for his mad and futile exertion in the pursuit of an illusion, he would not have been tired out so soon, nor so easily overpowered by thirst. Those followers of the Vedas who try to use these and similar quotations from the works of western orientalists, have ultimately found themselves in no better predicament than an antelope tiring itself out in the vain chase of a delusion. At the end of their laborious reasoning they only find themselves being stared in the face by the conclusion that the Vedas are vast but uncritical records of a race of men from Central Asia as it poured gradually into the Indian planes—a record of their progress from stage to stage and their wars against the aborigines whom they called by the name of *adi-Dravids*, or referred to them as *das* (slaves), for this is the conclusion which emerges from European research into Vedic literature. Europe's estimate of the Vedas is no more than this that they describe impressions of the conquering generals as with their hosts they crossed mountains, passed through primeval forests, reduced towns and villages along the route and occupied extensive territories—impressions which they have clothed in words which breathe of the elation felt by a conqueror, which move with a swing and a rhythm and abound in the rich imagery of poetry. Should this estimate be taken to be correct, it negatives the claim made on behalf of the Vedas that they are divinely revealed books. As the saying goes in Sanskrit, this is indeed digging a whole mountain to discover only a mouse at the end.

In many books in Sanskrit written in the archaic style it has been claimed that the Vedas are books of divine revelation. In support of this point of view, the argument produced by the *Mimansa* (one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy) is an argument that is also used by Sanskrit grammarians and Hindu astronomers. Taking their stand on this argument Sanskrit books on ritualism, rhetorics, ethics, theology and cosmogony, accept the divine origin of the Vedas.

Before proceeding to set down this argument briefly, it is necessary to remark that the claim to

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divine origin on behalf of the Vedas is treated by them first in three separate pieces. Then the three separate pieces are brought together in such a way as to yield a kind of suggestive meaning, which then is given a form as though it were already proved, and no more argument is then considered necessary. According to some people all the argument that is necessary lies concealed in the claim itself: according to others there is no need for argument on the point.

The *Nyay* school of logic has exerted itself to disprove the *Mimansa* point of view which, as we have seen, forms the basis of the argument; and the discussion between the two fills voluminous books, *i.e.*, the Mimansa claim that *Shabd* (word, Gr. logos) is eternal, and the Nyay refutation of this view and counter-claim that Shabd is created, therefore cannot be eternal. This discussion is to be found in a range of books which date from 300 B.C. to 1400 A.D; and during this time there has risen another school which does no more than state both these views point by point and strings them up into a necklace.

Obviously, it is impossible, in the compass of a brief article, to give a full account of this discussion, but to give only the gist of it, the Mimansa believes that Shabd is *Nitya* (eternal), while the *Nyay* believes that that Shabd is *Anitya* (not eternal). The Nyay school says that when mind, through the agency of the senses, comes in contact with matter, it takes in certain impressions which react upon muscles of the body causing contraction or expansion of the diaphragm or the respiratory canal and sending out through the mouth a varying quantity of air. This in turn stirs the muscles of the tongue producing a sound which is shabd (word). Shabd, therefore, is not eternal but created.

The Mimansa reply to this is that the view makes a fundamental error in attributing this origin to Shabd. The Mimansa says that there is a distinction between *utpatti* (creation) and *abhivakti*, and explains these two as follows: When a potter treats a

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lump of clay in a certain manner, then puts it on his wheel and moulds it into a pitcher, that is the *creation* of a pitcher. Now take a dark room in which there lies a pitcher in a corner, and a man without light is sent to fetch it. He would fail to perceive it and would go back and report that there was no pitcher in the room. When you take a lantern in your hand and by its light show him the pitcher, this is the *abhivakti* of the pitcher or its *ilumination*. The Mimansa then ends by saying that what was understood by the Nyay to be creation was in fact no more than an illumination.

This effectually silences the Nyay school which believes in realistic theory. But the dualism of the *Sankh* school refutes the illumination theory of the Mimansa in a different light. This school argues that what the Mimansa took to be creation really amounted to no more than a kind of illumination. For instance a piece of gold could be made into a number of things—a chain, a ring, a coin, and so on. Now all these things lay hidden in that piece of gold; the action of the *karan* and the *sihkari-karan* (the doer and his auxiliaries) only gave illumination to them. This was not to be confused with creation. The pitcher was latent in the lump of clay and the potter gave illumination to it in much the same way as a man made the pitcher visible by lamplight in a dark room; only in the less accurate language of every day life we spoke of the illumination in the case of the potter as being different from the one in the case of a man who made it visible with lamp-light. What we spoke of as creation was in fact only a stage of illumination.

The Sankh school further argued that if the light shed by this lamp was faint it would suffice to make visible a large object like a pitcher but would not suffice to pick out a needle lying on the floor. For that purpose a stronger light would be needed. As compared to a pitcher, a needle was very small, but the form in which the pitcher lay in that lump of clay was a thousand times more minute, and that was why the human eye failed to perceive it. The same was

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true of a piece of gold and the chains and rings and coins etc., into which it could be changed. In accordance with the action of the handicraftsman and his tools these things could be *illumined* in that piece. Thus, according to the view of the Sankh school, all material objects which we see around us are no more than illumination. There is no *creation* at all; only there is illumination at various stages in various forms. This view in the ultimate analysis means that just as for the purpose of reproduction certain germ cells are present in the animals and plants, similarly at one time the germ cells from which the animals and plants have themselves developed, and the material from which the inanimate objects were made, were all present in one and the same thing from which everything has sprung. The Sankh school calls this comprehensive element by the name *prakriti*, which is "matter." In matter there resides a force, an energy, a power, for which the modern expression is Cosmic Energy.

Confronted with the Sankh point of view the Mimansa school was greatly confused. The Mimansa had worked out a theory of illumination and creation from which the reasoning of Sankh cut out creation altogether, leaving only illumination. Sanskrit grammarians say, however, that the Sankh view did not destroy the theory of Shabd being eternal, but reputed only the Mimansa theory of creation and its definition of creation. Apart from that it upheld the idestructibility of matter. The Shabd was eternal because it was a quality of *akash* (space). Matter and its energy could not be separated from each other. The Akash was eternal; therefore its quality, *i.e.*, the Shabd, too, was eternal. The name of the eternal word, according to grammarians, is *sphota*.

Here the Vedanta school also came to the aid of the Mimansa, this being the reason why the Vedanta is often spoken of in Sanskrit as Utter-Mimansa.

The Prakriti of the Sankh school is lifeless which the Vedanta school pushes out of the focus of the

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picture and brings Monism instead and a theory of idealism. Vedanta philosophy turns round with the question: "Even when we have accepted the *purush*, the *atma* or the soul of the Sankh school, there still remains a riddle to be solved. Who brought the soul and Prakriti together? If the connection between the two existed of itself, then *Kaivalya* (oneness, emancipation) was impossible. Conception of the cause that could free the two from their mutual yoke, smashed to pieces the conception that the two were eternal". That is why instead of the dualism of the Sankh, which consists of soul and matter, Vedanta brings in Monism.

The Vedanta school approaches this theory of Monism in two ways, one of which is the Monism of Modern Science which forms the basis of the theory of evolution, *i.e.*, the lifeless nebulae, or the lifeless cosmic ray which evolved into the solar system and other systems of which the Universe consists, leading by stages to the protoplasm of biology. The Vedanta school does not believe in this Monism of the scientist; it believes rater in the Monism of the philosopher; and it regards the creation of the Universe to have taken place not along a line of evolution but of a kind of devolution. The starting point in this view is belief in an Omni-potent, Omni-present, and Omni-science being of whom man can not be in a position to know anything except through Revelation coming from that Being; and this in the point where Monism is transformed into Monotheism and the sphere of Religion begins. The scientist, however, while prepared to yield belief to Monism, hastens to condemn Monotheism for being dogmatic. Thus begins the conflict between Science and Religion of which one hears so much in these days.

The Monism of the scientist pushes materealism to the forefront; while the Monism of the philospher, or the Monotheism of Religion, lays the utmost emphasis on the spiritual aspect of life. That is all the difference that there is between Science and Religion – a

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difference only in the point emphasized. Things which the scientist accepts and calls them the "Laws of Nature", are the same which Religion designates as "Divine Wisdom". But this difference in name does and can not change the fundamental principle and the fundamental basis. The fact of the matter is that a rose remains as sweet by whatever name you call it.

In the last analysis, therefore, there is no conflict between religion and science, and the two do not contradict each other. Penetrating to the inner essence of both we arrive at the conclusion that: (*a*) Art consists of doing. (*b*) Science consists of knowing. (*c*) As Mellone has said, "Philosophy is the science of science, and then comes religion. Religion is the realisation of philosophy, namely, of all that is essential for every new step of development." All are, thus, like beads strung into a necklace, and the thread that runs through them all is sometimes called "super-humam agency," sometimes it is called the "super-soul" transcending all, or "amitabha", or "*ruh-al-kul*" or "Cosmic Energy," or "Providence," or "Natural Force," or "Alpha and Bitta," or "Shabdha-Brahm," or simply "Brahm". In the last resort Allah, God, Parmeshwer and Om mean the same thing. Only the conception of this Being is crude and vague in some religions, while it is clear and comprehensive in others, as in the case of Islam.

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AHMADIYYAT—ITS SIGNIFICANCE

My attention has been drawn to the editorial article, "A Religion in the Making", which has appeared in *The Light* in its issue of January 16, 1940. The article purports to be a comment on the speech I delivered at Qadian on the Spirit of Ahmadism in connection with the Jubilee celebrations in December last. I was not inclined to take any serious notice of this passing comment; but fearing that the erroneous conclusions sought to be drawn from the speech might mislead the public, I consider it proper to clarify some of the points so as to remove misconceptions that have arisen or are likely to arise.

In the first place, the word "Ahmadism" seems to have unnecessarily offended the learned editor, who sees in it the elements of a new religion which he fancies is being shaped at Qadian. He gloats over his slow discovery that after all the late Dr. Iqbal was perfectly justified in employing the word to signify the new "Qadiani" religion which in his opinion threatened to break the solidarity of Islam. He enthusiastically praises the pre-science of the Dana-i-Raz (Dr. Iqbal), and finds its fulfilment in my speech. He finds, further, that what I meant by Ahmadism—the title of my speech was 'The Spirit of Ahmadism'—was really "a new religion altogether, a religion distinct from Islam." Accusing the Ahmadis attached to the centre of excess of zeal the writer tauntingly quotes a Persian adage, پیران نمی پرند مریدان می پرانند which means: the saints do not fly, it is the disciples that make them fly. I hope I shall be permitted to take the liberty of slightly adapting the adage to the present case: مصنفان نمی پرند ناقدان می پرانند that is, the authors do not fly, it is the critics who make them fly. The fact is, the writer has approached the subject with

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his preconceived notions and has studied the speech, to be exact, its imperfect summary, with coloured glasses. He has read into certain passages meanings which the lecturer never intended them to convey. He has quoted a passage from which he jumps to the conclusion that by Ahmadism I meant "a religion distinct from Islam"; but he conveniently omitted to quote the sentence which immediately followed—"But Ahmadism was nothing but a new approach and an orientation of Islam which displayed it in its true setting in the present conditions of the world; it only applied the *Islamic* principles to the new conditions." Any sensible critic will easily understand that this sentence entirely runs counter to the conclusion that has been drawn, and that nothing was further from the mind of the lecturer than presenting Ahmadism "as a new, separate religion altogether."

I understand, the writer is one of those who do not believe in the prophethood of Ahmad. But does he not call him a Mujaddid? If he does not, I have nothing to say. If he does, what is the exact meaning of the word 'Mujaddid'? Does a Mujaddid come to accept *in toto* the views held by the Ulama; or does he bring from on high *new* gifts for the world which he expects all to accept? Does a divinely sent Mujaddid deign to stand before the bar of the so-called custodians of *shariat*, or, he comes as the final judge and the undisputed arbiter (حکما و عدلا) in matters religious? If Ahmad brought nothing which was not opposed to the cherished notions and pet ideas of the Ulama, why were they then up in arms against him? What was the fierce opposition about which Ahmad of revered memory had to face and combat all his life?

The fact of the matter is that if Ahmad had presented himself merely as Mujaddid, the storm of opposition would not have been so fierce as it actually was. Indeed a tendency was in evidence in certain quarters to receive him well. But Ahmad of course could not stop there. He was a mere instrument in

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Allah's hands. He claimed for himself what Allah asked him to claim. The moment Ahmad claimed under divine inspiration that he was the Promised Messiah, the claim fell like a bomb-shell in the camp of the Ulama. The opposition grew in severity when he claimed to be the Promised Mahdi of the last days. We may now put a straight question to the learned editor,—was, or was not Ahmad in your belief the Promised Messiah and the Promised Mahdi, the one who was to appear in the fourteenth century of the Hijra? Was he, or was he not the manifestation of the second raising (بعثت ثانیہ) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace of Allah be on him? If he was so, he was not merely, as the writer would have us believe, one of the ordinary Mujaddids that appear from century to century, but he must be distinguished from those that preceded him on the ground of a higher position Allah assigned to him, as also of a larger and more responsible role he was called upon to play as the 'gentle' manifestation of the Prophet's second raising, termed by Ahmad as بعثت جمالی I do not propose, at any rate for the present, to raise the question of prophethood, which was not the subject of discussion in the lecture delivered.

I wonder if the learned editor has ever pondered over the reasons that led Ahmad to form a separate *jamaat* with a separate name, not an *ummat* as he chooses to call gratuitously. Will he please enlighten us, for instance, if he approves or disapproves of Ahmad's orders that no Ahmadi may offer his prayers behind a non-Ahmadi *imam*; or that no Ahmadi should give his daughter in marriage to a non-Ahmadi? If these points are dispassionately considered there is no escape from the conclusion that Ahmad's entire efforts were directed towards the creation of an organized *jamaat* with distinct characteristics as also special responsibilities of its own. If you find in such separatist efforts the gradual making of a new religion the charge will be at the very door of the Promised

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Messiah. But no; our position is absolutely different. While these actions, and a succession of others, went to establish and strengthen what I have called the revivalistic movement *within* Islam, they never offered, nor were they ever intended to offer, *a substitute for Islam* in the form of a new religion.

Indeed, Ahmad has reverted to this subject again and again in his writings. It must however be understood that a revivalistic movement need not have the only slogan, Back to Islam. It must have another cry, *Forward* with Islam. It must take cognisance of the conditions prevailing in the present age, and must have in view the life and thought of the day. Nay, it should go a step further; it should adjudge the tendencies of the age and envisage even the coming events; it should have an estimate of the current, moral and spiritual values and provide against the situations of the future. Briefly, the movement should show that as Islam successfully regulated and guided the life and thought of man in the past, it possesses the requisite power of regulating human life and conduct in the present, and has the potentialities of being a dependable guide of humanity in the future. Ahmad himself has explained that his mission was two-fold:—

(1) To extricate Islam out of a mass of extraneous matter that had gathered round it, and to clear it of all manners of impurities that had darkened its fair face.

(2) To re-interpret Islam, under divine illumination, in such terms that it might answer satisfactorily to the spiritual and temporal needs of the age, and might offer the complete solution of the varied and varying problems that arise out of the very complexities of the present day life, both individual and collective. To show, further, that Islam took its stand on eternal principles and possessed potentialities of controlling the moral and spiritual forces of the world in such wise as to lead humanity from precedent to precedent to real progress and true happiness.

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It is the second aspect of his mission that is responsible for the distinctive feature which the Ahmadiyya Movement possesses, but which the learned writer has unhappily failed to appreciate. Who can deny that the complex problems that have arisen to-day in the social, economical and political spheres of human activity, are crying for solution,—that new diseases have arisen demanding new remedies? The learned editor has done me gross injustice when he infers from my speech that in my view the Holy Quran "has no more wisdom for the baffling complexities of modern life." I said nothing of the kind, nor did I make the remotest suggestion in that direction. What I said was, that the Holy Quran was sufficient for all ages as it was for the present age; but Allah out of His wisdom raised Ahmad in the fulness of time, inspired him with the Holy Spirit, and filled him with His own Knowledge and revelation, thus enabling him to develop truths latent in the Holy Quran—the inexhaustible mine of knowledge and guidance—as also to discover springs of new truths therein, and to apply both to new conditions. With divine assistance Ahmad forged new weapons out of the Quranic materials with which he fought his battles. Thus was built up a new science of *Kalam*, which was certainly richer in content and quality and wider in range and scope than what had been built by Imam Al-Ghazali to combat the poisonous influence of the Hellenism of his day. Rightly understood, this must be regarded as one of the richest contributions of Ahmadism to human knowledge and progress. The learned editor only betrays his lack of appreciation when he says "It is a mis-statement of fact to say that Ahmadism has made any new and original contribution to human thought in any sphere of life, social, political, economic national or international."

The learned editor discovers in my thesis the elements of the Babi argument. But the analogy he seeks to draw is as false as it is misleading. In the one case, not a tittle of the Holy Quran is considered to have been abrogated in the other, the Islamic law

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is openly declared to be inoperative with the coming of Babism. In the one case nothing is recognised which has no bearing on the personality of the Holy Prophet, may peace of Allah be on him; in the other, the Holy Prophet is out of the picture.

I give below a significant quotation from the writings of the Promised Messiah.

"Know, therefore, that the open miracle of the Holy Quran which can be demonstrated to the people of all nations and all tongues, and whereby we can convince and confute every person, whether an Indian, Persian, European, American or other, is that it is a limitless treasure of Divine Truths and Realities, heavenly Sciences and spiritual Philosophies, which are discovered in it in every age *according to the needs of mankind*, and which, like armed soldiers, stand ever ready to combat every new falsehood. If the Holy Quran had been limited in its meaning and interpretation, it could not be regarded as a perfect miracle. Mere beauty of diction and purity of language, even if miraculous, are not matters which can be appreciated by the literate and illitrate alike. The greatest miracle of the Holy Quran is, that its treasures are inexhaustible, and a person, who does not perceive this miracle, is entirely shut out from the real knowledge of the Holy Quran. Remember that this miracle of the Holy Quran is so perfect that it has in every age proved more potent than the sword. The Holy Quran contains a full and complete refutation of every doubt which is suggested *by each succeeding age* under the ever-changing conditions of the world, and a reply to every criticism which may be based on new knowledge and new discoveries.

"No Divine Truth has been put forward or can ever be put forward by a follower of any other religion, be he a Brahmo, a Buddhist or an Arya, or be a follower of any other school of thought, which Truth has not already found a place in the Holy Quran. The treasures of the Holy Quran are inexhaustible, and as the wonders of the Book of Nature are limitless, and

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each succeeding age discovers fresh properties and new virtues in nature, the same is the case with the Word of God, so that there may be no disparity between God's Work and his Word" (*Izala-i-Auham*, pp. 305-311).

At the end of the editorial note, another article is promised. I have not yet seen it. If and when it comes my way I will of course supplement the present note, in case there are points in the promised article worthy of notice.

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"THE LIGHT" OF LAHORE

The Light of Lahore, which is an organ of the seceders from allegiance to Khilafat, in its editorial columns of the issue of January 24 has commented upon an article on "The Crisis over Khilafat" in our issue of January 1940.

The purport and the purpose of this comment is to draw attention to the "trend of the Qadian Movement from its very inception towards separation from the main body of Islam," and to the fact that "from its very inception it has considered it a great sin to make Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis into one, aiming at the formation of a separate community distinct from the general community of the Musalmans."

The first thing in regard to this comment is that it is extremely puzzling. Against whom is it aimed? The "Qadian Movement", as everyone knows, was founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi to whom our Lahore friends too yield belief in his claims. Leaders of the Lahore Group are proud to call themselves disciples of the Promised Messiah, or at any rate that was their attitude until a very short time ago. But now they seem to think differently as *The Light* no longer sees any harm in criticising the Promised Messiah whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad called the *Hakam* and *Adal* of this age.

The editorial writer of *The Light* finds fault with the "Qadian Movement" for not desiring "to make Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis into one people". This statement with regard to the Ahmadiyya Movement is not correct, in addition to which it is altogether beside the point. *The Light* has in view in these remarks—its discovery that "Qadianism" was a new religion in the making. The Ahmadiyya Movement certainly

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believes that spiritually the living and the dead cannot work together unless the dead are first quickened into life. To this task the Ahmadiyya Movement has throughout its history turned its best resources, and of course it is reaping a rich harvest all round - a fact of which even *The Light* too would be well aware.

But Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and his friends, for whom *The Light* speaks, were rather like those people who wanted "to get rich quick". Spiritually they wanted to join hands with the general body of Muslims without taking the trouble to put life into them first, which was tedious work, requiring patience and perseverance, and not always quite popular. So they tried to make a short cut, but the Ahmadiyya Community repudiated their lead in the matter, and the "Leaders" marched off to Lahore in great dudgeon where they have been ever since. And now *The Light* comes out with a long yarn that "Qadianism is really developing into a new religion".

What does *The Light* mean by this expression? Is it meant to imply that what it is pleased to call "Qadianism" stands for anything other than the Holy Quran and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad? If that is the intention, the charge is dealt with at some length elsewhere in this issue.

The Light, evidently believes with the German Ministry of Propaganda that even a false view, provided it was repeated often enough, had as good a chance of being accepted by the public as truth itself. Propaganda of this kind, however, is not in the best traditions of journalistic integrity; but little else could be expected from a journal that saw no harm in reproducing an article from *The Review of Religions* without acknowledging it to its source, as it did, for instance, in the case of an article entitled "Islamic Conception of Conversion" in its issue of November 24, 1939.

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REVIEWS

The Problem of Minorities, or Communal representation in India, by K. B. Krishna, Allen and Unwin, London. 15 *s.* net.

Ordinarily the problem of minorities would not be a matter for concern to a journal like *The Review of Religions*. But in India this problem has a direct bearing upon the future of Religion in the country where Hinduism is continually losing ground to Islam. Politically, Hindu India has found its feet in the 20th century, but Hinduism as a religion is still tottering from the impact of Islam, and is not likely to find its balance again. And now there is also a third factor in the field—Christianity,—which, too, is causing serious concern to Hindu leaders for its progress they are unable to check.

But the Christians and Muslims in India are minorities. If the Congress propaganda here and abroad is allowed to go unchallenged, in the new constitution the minorities would find themselves left out in the cold. However, neither the full force of this propaganda nor the danger to their existence which it constitutes are properly appreciated by the Muslims and the other minorities concerned.

Even a casual dip into the pages of *The Problem of Minorities* is enough to make one feel the vigour of the Congress campaign against the right of the minorities to special protection. The great thing about Dr. Krishna's book is the vast range of his study of the official and semi-official annals, and with the help of this study he proceeds to trace out the history of the British policy of "counterpoise" in India of which, according to Dr. Krishna, the communal problem is but a manifestation. But the book fails to impress because it is too one-sided, and its angle of vision is rather askanse. To attribute the apprehensions felt by the minorities—the Muslims and the untouchables—to British policy is to make too great a demand on the credulity of a man of average intelligence with some knowledge of India. Dr. Krishna quotes Karl Marx to the following effect, but singularly enough he has himself missed the meaning of the passage altogether ;

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> "How came it that English supremacy was established in India? The paramount power of the Mogul was broken by the viceroys. The power of the viceroys was broken by the Mahrattas, the power of the Mahrattas was broken by the Afghans: and while all were struggling against all, the British rushed in and were able to subdue them all. A country not only divided between Muhammadan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe between caste and caste, a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest!"

The problem of minorities, thus, is no creation of the British but a result of the too narrow conception of self-interest created in the Hindu mind by nearly 3,000 years of sharp divisions into castes. To quote from the book itself, "If there were no classes with conflicting interests and willing to be counter-poised, there would be no counter-poiser."

"Shahan-i-Islam ki Rawadarian," *by Malik Fazal Husain, Anjuman Taraqqi Islam, Qadian, India.*

By far the greater part of Hindu-Muslim tension in India was traceable to wild and fanciful stories of the intolerance of Muslim rulers, and baseless allegations against the peaceful nature of the teachings of Islam. This book, using only quotations from Hindu writers and speakers, fully refutes these allegations; and Malik Fazal Husain, by compiling it, had done a great service to the cause of Hindu-Muslim Unity. In proportion to the circle of its readers it would help to clear the air between the two Communities The Hindus felt bitter against the Muslims for imagined wrongs, while the Muslims were constantly irritated by the false but persistent propaganda carried on by certain elements in the country. To the Hindus, on the one hand, this book would show that the wrongs, of which the memory rankled in their hearts, were unreal, with no evidence in history; to the Muslims, on the other, it would show that there were fairminded writers even among the Hindus who deemed it their duty to clear the name of Muslim kings

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of India of the injustice done to them by popular Hindu estimate.

"**Khuddam-al-Ahmadiyya,**" being a report of two years' work, compiled by the General Secretary of this body, makes very interesting reading. The Khuddam-al-Ahmadiyya is an organisation of Ahmady young men between the ages of 15 and 40, its main purpose being to prepare the coming generations to shoulder the responsibilities devolving upon them as Ahmadies. The report covers a number of activities—education, training, physical culture, social service, a programme to impress the dignity of labour upon members and the general public, literacy campaign, etc. It is well written and may confidently be expected to further strengthen the organisation by focussiug public attention upon it.

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